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16 June 1961

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Initial Debriefing of AVANCE

1. Subject was met at the Hotel Dupont Plaza from 0930 to 1515 on 15 June 1961.
2. Most of the conversation at this first meeting centered on debriefing of staybehind net, propaganda effectiveness and, primarily, AMRS's own future.
3. Propaganda. Subject stated that the fish symbol appears everywhere. He has seen the symbol in elevators, public buildings, public toilets, bus and train depots, park benches, etc. His remark that, "You were always conscious of them despite the fact that in most places they were taken down immediately," is quite indicative of the wide distribution and use of the symbol. Most of the symbols that he saw were in chalk rather than the blue stamp. Subject believes most people thought the fish to be a Christian symbol rather than a counter revolutionary one.

Subject had seen many clandestine newspapers, leaflets, and pamphlets even up until the last moment of his departure. He listed Avance, Rescate, Prensa Libre, Bohemia Libre and La Marina as periodicals he had seen. He saw them in private homes (most of the homes he visited were counter revolutionary). Most of the copies were quite "beat up," indicating to him that they had been passed from hand to hand. In his opinion, people treasured the copies that they had. He cited the case of one girl who carried copies in her handbag to show to other girls in her office. Subject's only criticism of the periodicals was that at times they became a little too flowery. In his words, "There were too many adjectives." He thought that a more direct approach would be more effective.

He claims that everybody listens to Radio Swan but nobody believes it. He mentioned one Swan broadcast which announced that bodies were lying all over the Malecon and rotting in the sun. Listeners went to view this and found that there were no bodies there. Voice of America is listened to and is quite highly regarded. Subject cited two other broadcasts that he considers counter revolutionary and which are well thought of; one originates from New York and one from Key West. He thinks that most people listen to Miami when conditions are right. I asked why people continue to listen to Swan if it is so discredited. He stated that, although it is not believed, it is still a contact with the outside world. There is no penalty for listening and all people will openly discuss

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individual programs. One militia man remarked, "If we don't listen to these broadcasts, how will we know what the imperialists are thinking?"

I asked about Americans in prison. Subject knew of only BINAIRIS and himself. He claimed that, although prison conditions were horrible during his stay there because of lack of adequate food and sanitation facilities, the prisoners were not physically abused.

4. Staybehind. Rather than describing the net in detail, I am attaching to this report a diagram of the net as it existed when AMIRE departed. The names used are code names and are on record with WH/4/FI.

5. Personal Situation of AMIRE. Subject is obviously fascinated with the intelligence business and wishes to continue with us and establish a career. He desires some formal training. I agreed that he should get training and said that, while he is on vacation, we would try to set up some courses for him. Subject would like to have a contract with us; he fears that his next assignment might be for only a short time and that he will be cut loose when it is completed.

Although we did not discuss it, he evidently had in mind career agent status. I am not aware of Agency policy on assigning agents to this status, but I believe that we have a real asset in AMIRE and that consideration should be given to making him a career agent. Subject's 201 shows an individual with a background both of intelligence and experience that would indicate an assignment in any Latin American country. In addition, he has demonstrated a natural bent for the intelligence business. Although his responsibility was not as great as that of AMRYE, he nevertheless contributed very greatly in establishment of the staybehind net, working long hours under most trying circumstances. His concept of tradecraft is remarkable for a man who has only been in this business for approximately nine months. When we were going over the diagram of the staybehind net, he was able to explain in a most logical way the reasons for setting it up as it is. For example, communications are arranged from higher to lower echelons and, only where necessary, are communications set up both ways. Subject has gained in experience in a short period of time what it took most of us years to acquire. It would be a shame to let this experience go by the board.

6. Incidentals. Subject claims that, on the second trip that AMDOODLE 1 made, included in the pouch were five bottles of Miltown, three guayaberas, and an item of jewelry that never got to its ultimate destination. The first two items were for his wife; the other, for a customer of his in Buffalo, N.Y. He says that he is

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not so much interested in the items but in the fact that communications seem to have broken down somewhat. Also, he requested that we check on visas for (FLAM) and his friends. He mentioned that (NEN) will be going to Mexico and will need a visa for the U.S.

03 ROBERT CROKE *03*

WH/4/FI(RCroke:gep:16 Jun 61)

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